

OCMW Blankenberge

(Municipal Service for Social Welfare)

Several locations connected together through a Cisco wireless Aironet network



"WITH THIS INSTALLATION, OUR STAFF MEMBERS ARE CONTINUOUSLY CONNECTED TO THE CENTRAL DATABASE. THIS INVESTMENT WILL PAY FOR ITSELF IN LESS THAN TWO YEARS AND THE INSTALLATION WENT EXCEPTIONALLY SMOOTHLY."

Luc Demeulemeester, *Secretary of OCMW Blankenberge*

FIVE LOCATIONS WORK WITH THE SAME FILES

The activities of the OCMW Blankenberge are not limited to the statutory social services. The organisation also runs a retirement home, two pre-school crèches, an employment service and a social service centre with meals-on-wheels, restaurant, language and informatics classes and all kinds of informative and recreational activities.

All the divisions of the OCMW Blankenberge are spread out over five locations but they use the same files and databases in their daily work. Until early 2001, these files could only be consulted at the place where they were stored. Nevertheless, the OCMW had plans to convert paper records to electronic ones as much as possible. So it seemed obvious to establish an online connection that would give all staff members the most recent data available.

Wireless connection

The OCMW service of Blankenberge therefore installed Cisco's wireless Aironet connection between the different locations in the borough. As well as giving all staff members the opportunity to work online with the central databases, it also simplifies the data management.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Besides the statutory social security provisions, the OCMW of Blankenberge also provides numerous other services and activities. All the departments are spread out over five locations and use the same files and databases in their daily work.

Challenge

The OCMW is increasingly changing over from paper to electronic files. It would like to take this opportunity to provide everyone with continuous access to the files.

Solution

The OCMW service of Blankenberge installed a Cisco wireless Aironet connection between the different locations within the borough.

Results

All staff members work online with a central database that is always up-to-date. Data management is simplified. Moreover, a wireless network is faster and cheaper than a leased line.

Moreover, a wireless network is faster and cheaper than a traditional leased line.

Integrated Quality Networks (IQN) from Londerzeel installed equipment from the Cisco Aironet 340 range to connect the different local area networks (LANs). They also provided Cisco Yagi aerials from the Aironet 340 series. These are installed on the roof of the retirement home, one of the crèches and the employment service Jobkracht 10. Cisco's Yagi aerials were designed for wireless connections outdoors over medium-range distances. They are directional aerials that focus the transmission towards a specified direction to increase the distance being bridged.

Fast and cheap

All departments can now communicate with each other through the Yagi aerials on the centrally located retirement home. The head office had already been connected with the retirement home through a private fibreglass cable. The only ADSL connection is made with the second crèche, which was needed because there was no visual contact with this building. The Cisco VPN concentrator used for this also maximises the safety of the wireless network.

“This is without doubt an advantageous solution. We have compared the price for the Aironet network with the cost of connecting the buildings through leased lines. The installation of the wireless network cost about 12 400 euros, but afterwards there is no subscription or maintenance. For leased-line connections, the OCMW would have had to budget around about 7500 euros annually,” according to Jean-Pierre Clauws, director of IQN. “Moreover, the Aironet connection is much faster – 10 megabits per second (Mbps) instead of 64 or 128 kbps for an ordinary leased line.”

“This investment will pay for itself in less than two years and the installation went exceptionally smoothly. Our own staff put up the aerials. The Yagi aerials are relatively small, so the visual intrusion on the building’s appearance is acceptable. After that, IQN took over and everything was done within a day. We did not incur extra costs for additional hardware or software,” adds Luc Demeulemeester, Secretary of OCMW Blankenberge.

Central data management

“With this installation, 35 of our staff members are continually connected to the central database. All data are now centralised and we only need to make one backup. So all our files are available and up-to-date at all locations. Any changes and additions are entered and stored straightaway. So you no longer need to keep making phone calls if you want to find out something,” concludes Luc Demeulemeester..



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